

Literature.

The History of Ancient America anterior to the time of Columbus, proving the Identity of the Aborigines with the Tyrians and Israelites, and the Introduction of Christianity into the Western Hemisphere by the Apostle St. Thomas.—By GEORGE JONES, M.R.S.L., &c. Longman & Co.

THE discovery of the ruins of several extensive and once beautiful cities among the forests of central America, has led to many conjectures as to their origin; and Mr. Jones, who has resided for a considerable portion of his life in that country, and has devoted the last fifteen years to study and research, has at length given to the public the result of his labours. The conclusion to which he has arrived, and which the title briefly sets forth, will no doubt at first sight startle the gentle reader, but we trust that when he has followed our author through his train of reasoning, he will give him credit for not having formed his opinion until he had fully investigated the subject. Mr. Jones is, however, a man of poetic temperament, and we should say rather inclined to be led astray by his imagination; his readers will no doubt perceive in his style more than they may consider consistent in the language of the historian, but they must recollect that Herodotus dedicated his labours to the muses, and that our author has but followed his steps in propitiating their smiles.

He says in his preface—

"Knowing from experience, that works upon antiquities, described in language cold as the marble they illustrate, are not of deep interest to the general reader, the author has, therefore, avoided the usual frigid style, and has consequently led around them such fervent and glowing—their novel characters have authorized or demanded."

Our author at the commencement of the volume, enlarging upon the importance of architecture and sculpture, in tracing out the origin and antiquity of the ruined cities, says:—

"Architecture has erected his lofty temples, palaces, and mansions; and Sculpture has with her magic wand, charmed and adorned them with historic facts, legends, and romances. The former planned the porticoes, columns, and proportions; but the latter was the power whereby they were fashioned and embellished. Architecture, by his peculiar characteristic, gives intelligence as we wander amid his works, that we are on the land of Egypt, or the plains of Persia; on the Acropolis of Athens, or the land of Romulus and the Coliseum; and whether we gaze upon the sky-pointed pyramid, the stern or the graceful Doric, the Ionic of the Ilium, or the acanthus-crowned Corinthian—they one and all have voices of oracular power, proclaiming to the classic scholar the nation from whence they arose to life and beauty.

"Even the horizontal and curved lines of architecture have their especial records, for they state the time in the history of the arts when they were erected, even without a sculptured cypher; for the level lines of the Cyclopean and Egyptian walls, with their attendant apertures, give certain knowledge that they were erected before the principle of the Grecian arch was known or practised."

"Sculpture can speak even of the religious mind of the deceased, bring it to memory, and instruct us as to the means whereby the departed attained his hope of salvation; it presents the transparent medium through which he gazed upon futurity, and believed in his approach to God; for the cross or crescent upon a tombstone needs no other language to inform the passer-by, that the departed was a follower of Christ or Mahomet!

"If, then, the mind of a solitary corpse can, as it were, be again vivified by merely contemplating the sculptured emblem of the dead, and that from a single gravestone, may not entire nations be historically resuscitated, when the human eye and mind are brought to gaze upon and investigate whole cities of ruins, with their sculptured temples, tombs, and palaces? Yes, though they should be found amid the darkened forests of the western continent, where the panther and beasts of prey are thought alone to dwell. Yes! Palenque, Copan, Chiapas, and their ruined sisters, have historic voices for posterity from their 'cities of the dead,' the Pompeii and Herculaneum of the western hemisphere, yet more aged and venerable than even those victims of Vesuvius!"

Our author then gives a detailed account of these magnificent ruins, which, after being entombed for centuries in the forest, have at length been brought to light by the enterprise

of modern travellers. He enters minutely into the character of their architecture, with its sculptured and pictorial decorations, and connects it with that of Tyre. We have not, however, space to follow him through his elaborate and interesting arguments, nor will we deprive our readers of the pleasure of perusing what may justly be called a romance of time, or following the Tyrians in their adventures in the western world. The work will be interesting to all, but more particularly to the architect, to whom we strongly recommend it, and being elegantly got up, will prove an appropriate *catalina* to the student of the building art. It is embellished with a portrait of the author, and two vignettes, one from a design by Smith, and is dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Rhine, translated from the French of Victor Hugo.—D. M. Aird, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden.

WE have for some two or three hours been engaged in going through Mr. Aird's translation of Victor Hugo's *Rhine*; when we say "going through," do not let it be supposed that we mean the tedious performance of a duty imposed upon us, but that we were constrained to devote more than usual attention by the captivating descriptions the work abounds in. We had read Hugo's *Rhine* in his own language, and should say that the

translator has performed his task with ability. It should be remembered that to a translator this is perhaps the most difficult work of the highly imaginative and talented man whose name it bears; a series of peculiarities of expression in which a mind so constituted would indulge; appropriate in the first degree, but scarcely tangible in sober English.

Our *voyageur* departs from Paris through Meaux, where he arrives after a journey full of incident; his description of the *façade* of the cathedral there is singularly characteristic of his style and the modes of expression which run through the work. "The pediment of the central doorway is the most curious; the inferior compartment represents Jeanne, wife of Philippe le Bel, from the *deniers* of whom the church was built after her death. The Queen of France, her cathedral in her hand, is represented at the gates of Paradise; St. Peter has opened the folding-doors to her; behind the Queen is the handsome King Philippe, with sad and rueful countenance. The queen, who is gorgeously attired, and exceedingly well-sculptured, points out to St. Peter the *paucres diables* of a king, and with a side look and shrug of the shoulders, seems to say—

'Bah! allow him to pass into the bargain.'

The route by Montmerrail is resumed, but the arrival there undistinguished by anything beyond a pleasing sketch which, having the opportunity, we offer to the reader.



Speaking of Epernay, that name so frequently and familiarly welcomed among us on this side the channel, Hugo has the single line, "Epernay—yes, it is the town for champagne—nothing else." At Varennes he recollected and repeats the circumstance that led to the arrest of the unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth, and concludes thus: "I put up for the night at a very ancient *auberge*, which had the portrait of Louis-Philippe above the door, with the words inscribed—

'Au Grand Monarque.'

During the last hundred years, most probably, Louis the Fifteenth, Buonaparte, and Charles the Tenth had each figured in his turn. Louis the Sixteenth was perhaps arrested at the Grand Monarque, and, looking up, saw the por-

trait of himself—*Paucres Grand Monarque* of the territory of Champagne, it is said." "The ancient annals are not less glorious than the modern; the country is full of *sweet souvenirs*: Meroving and the Franks, Actius and the Romans, Theodoric and the Visigoths, Mount Jules and the tomb of Jovianus. Antiquity here lives, speaks, and cries out to the traveller, 'Sta Victor!'

We are compelled for the moment to close our notice, though scarcely entered upon our journey, and not yet within view of the "beautiful Rhine." There is, however, so much of the really interesting to dwell upon, recount, or transcribe, as our readers may have it, that we shall resume our progress next week.

MR. R. WITTY, CIVIL ENGINEER.

WE understand that the case of Mr. Richard Witty, of this town, civil engineer, is in course of being submitted to the consideration of her Majesty's Government, for the purpose of getting his name placed on the pension list, as some slight recompense for the services he has rendered to society as a man of science. Mr. Witty has obtained as many as ten patents, for important improvements in the steam-engine, and inventions for gas burning;

the consumption of smoke, &c.; but though these were all most successful, the wealth they produced him was all expended in furthering their practical utility, and he is now, on the verge of threescore years and ten, in extreme destitution. It is certainly a case which well deserves the attention of the Government; and we would fain hope that the members for the borough will make such a representation of it in the proper quarter, as may have the effect of securing him a small pension for the remainder of his life.—*Hull Packet*.